



Pollution Prevention

What is pollution prevention?

Pollution prevention (P2) is the use of materials, processes, or practices that reduce the use of hazardous materials, energy, water, or other resources and practices that protect natural resources through conservation or more efficient use. This is often referred to as source reduction. Pollution prevention is different from recycling. The goal of pollution prevention and source reduction is to reduce so there is not as much to recycle or dispose of later.

What can you do at home?

You can help prevent pollution at home by taking steps to reduce the amount of wastes and pollution your household generates. You can also choose to purchase products that produce less pollution during their manufacture. Following are some suggestions:

Reduce the use of hazardous substances:

- Purchase only as much of a household or lawn chemical as you can use.
- When purchasing herbicides, pesticides, or other lawn or household chemicals, look for the least harmful product that will still get the job done.
- Follow chemical product labels. Use the amount indicated on the label. More is not better and could actually be harmful.

Reduce energy use:

- Keep your home heated to 68 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and 60 at night.
- Turn your water heater down to 120 degrees Fahrenheit and insulate the hot water heater and heating and cooling pipes.
- Look for the Energy Star label on products and equipment.
- Make sure your house is well insulated.
- Replace your light fixtures with energy conserving fluorescent bulbs.
- Landscape your home to make it cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.
- Replace your out of commission mercury thermostat with a programmable thermostat.

Reduce water use:

- Don't let the water run while shaving or brushing your teeth.
- Consider a toilet that uses less water and install water saving-devices in the bathrooms such as a low flow showerhead.
- Fix leaking faucets and toilets.
- Use the appropriate water level or load size selection on the washing machine. Consider replacing old washing machines with newer, more efficient machines.
- Operate the dishwasher only when completely full.
- Sweep driveways, sidewalks, and steps rather than hosing them off.

Implement other pollution prevention ideas:

- Purchase products with less packaging. Purchasing in bulk can reduce packaging and cost, but be sure you will be able to use the entire product before it expires.
- Make a personal commitment to examine your lifestyle and its impact on our earth's resources.

What can you do at school?

You have an impact on the environment while you are at school. To prevent pollution, you can:

- Encourage school officials to use energy-efficient lights.
- Share rides to get to school, to go home, or to go places with your friends.

- Study the amount of water your school uses each day; see if it can be reduced.
- Encourage school officials to buy non-toxic cleaning supplies in bulk or condensed forms.

What can you do at work?

Every business generates waste. For some, it may be only waste paper or dirty water; for others, it may be hazardous or toxic wastes that require special handling and disposal. Whatever the type or volume of waste your company generates, it is all the same in one respect—it is costing you money! In fact, you're paying for it twice—once when you buy it and the second time when you throw it away. The bottom line is that preventing waste will save you money. By consuming and throwing away less, you will reduce the need to handle, treat, and dispose of waste. Waste prevention at work can take many forms, including:

Reduce energy use:

- Use natural light whenever possible.
- Turn off lights and office machines when not needed.
- Unscrew unneeded light bulbs.
- Save electricity by using energy-efficient lights and heating and cooling units.
- Consider installing occupancy and day lighting sensors.
- Consider using timers on lighting systems and office equipment.
- Set your thermostat to reduce heating and air conditioning systems during unoccupied hours.
- Have your heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems serviced at least once a year.
- Consider buying multifunction machines and equipment labeled with Energy Star.

Reduce water use:

- Place water-saving devices in restrooms and the kitchen faucets.

Reduce hazardous substance use:

- Take steps to eliminate leaks and spills.
- Buy non-toxic cleaning supplies in bulk or condensed forms.
- Buy chlorine-free or the least percentage of chlorine content printing and writing paper and tissue products.
- Substitute non-toxic materials wherever possible.
- Improve material receiving, storage, and handling processes to reduce wastes.

Implement other pollution prevention ideas:

- Make two-sided copies and use e-mail in place of printed copies.
- Purchase durable, long-lasting materials.
- Strive to eliminate raw materials that are not incorporated into your final product or service.
- Reduce the amount of packaging.
- Implement in-process recycling.
- Encourage carpooling for business trips and for commuting to work.
- Conduct periodic self-appraisals of the use of raw materials and evaluate the impact of work activities on the environment.
- Supply your office kitchen with glasses, plates and silverware instead of disposables.
- Reuse computer disks.
- Consider buying re-manufactured or refillable toner cartridges for copiers.
- Re-use envelopes, bags and mailers.
- Set up an area in your business for employees to exchange or give away unwanted items.

What can you do in the community?

Help your community keep good quality drinking water, healthy air, and productive soil through the following steps:

- Take an active interest in local issues related to pollution.
- Encourage local officials to prevent and plan for accidents involving hazardous chemicals.
- Spread the word that composting, mulching, recycling, and proper disposal of household chemicals are important.

What question should you ask yourself?

Take time to question and consider your way of life. For one week, or even one day, ask yourself...

- Where did this item come from?
- Was water used to make or grow it?
- What is the effect on the planet to produce this item?
- Is it replaceable?
- What will this item do to the environment while I'm responsible for it?
- Where will this item finally end up?
- Is this habit wasteful?
- Can I do things differently so my impact on resources and energy is less?
- Am I a wise steward of the earth's resources?

Where can I get more information?

- For more information, contact the **Indiana Department of Environmental Management**, Office of Pollution Prevention and Technical Assistance at (800) 988-7901 or visit our IDEM Web page at: www.IN.gov/idem/oppta/p2.
- **The Consumer Labeling Initiative** is a voluntary, cooperative effort to foster pollution prevention, empower consumer choice, and improve understanding by presenting clear, consistent, and useful safe use, environmental, and health information on household consumer product labels. For more information on this initiative, check the Web at www.epa.gov/opptintr/labeling/index.htm.
- **Environmentally Preferable Purchasing** is a federal program that encourages and assists executive agencies in the purchasing of environmentally-preferable products and services. Any business can use the tools already developed to help when purchasing products. More information is available on the Web at www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/tools/toolsuite.htm.
- **The Small Business Guide to Pollution Prevention** is available on the Web at www.epa.gov/p2/assist/sbg.htm and outlines steps to take to begin determining where pollution prevention is possible at your business.
- **U.S. EPA's Water Efficiency Program** provides water conservation ideas for homeowners, industry, businesses, and government. More information is available on the Web at www.epa.gov/owm/water-efficiency/index.htm.